

What is Stormwater?



A Quick Reference Guide To Understanding Stormwater



What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground

Why is stormwater runoff a problem?

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm drainage system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm drainage system is discharged untreated into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water.



Some effects of Stormwater Pollution:

Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats.

Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards often making beach closures necessary.

Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.

Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.

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www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater